

Hot Weather Can Kill You

If you work outdoors in hot weather, or work in other hot environments, you are at risk for heat illnesses. The most serious of these illnesses is heat stroke, a life-threatening condition requiring immediate medical attention.

Take these precautions to avoid heat illness:

- Take it easy. Working in a hot environment is a stress on your body, so don't overdo it. Take frequent short breaks.
- Drink plenty of water, and drink it frequently. Avoid alcoholic beverages and drinks containing caffeine which can contribute to dehydration.
- Dress in lightweight fabrics that provide ventilation. Light colors are cooler than dark colors which absorb the sun's heat.
- Know you are at particular risk for heat illness if you are overweight, in poor health, poor physical condition, have heart disease, diabetes or other medical conditions.

Know the symptoms of heat illness:

- Heat cramps are caused by heavy sweating which can deplete the body of salt. They may be accompanied by hot, moist skin and a slightly elevated body temperature. The cramps in the arms, legs or stomach can occur

while you are working, or when you are relaxing after your shift. Heat cramps are a danger signal of heat stress.

- Heat exhaustion may be characterized by heavy sweating, strong thirst, cool and moist skin, a quick pulse, rapid breathing, nausea, a feeling of fatigue and possibly fainting. Heat exhaustion indicates the body's mechanism for controlling heat is beginning to break down.
- Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency that can quickly proceed to unconsciousness and death. It occurs when the body loses too much salt and water so that sweating stops. At that point, the body's temperature control mechanism fails and body temperature increases rapidly. Symptoms include hot, red, dry skin, a quick pulse, difficulty breathing, dizziness, confusion, strange behavior, weakness and nausea. Heat stroke can quickly progress to convulsions, coma, loss of pulse and an extreme body temperature. Death can follow rapidly.

Know how to treat heat illness:

- Treat heat cramps by moving into the shade and loosening clothing. Drink a lightly salted liquid. If cramps persist, seek medical help.
- For heat exhaustion, cool the victim as fast as possible, fanning

and pouring water on the victim if necessary. Have the victim drink water and call immediately for medical help.

- For heat stroke, immediately begin cooling the victim to lower the body temperature as fast as possible. Immerse him in water or use ice to cool his body. Call for an ambulance immediately.

Other hot weather hazards:

- Sunburn is another hazard of hot weather. Not only is sunburn a painful condition, but it can contribute to skin cancer. Cover up to prevent sunburn. A hat with a brim, long-sleeved shirt and pants rather than shorts can help prevent burning. Use a sunblock with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Try to stay out of the sun during the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Too much bright sunlight can cause temporary eyestrain and permanent eye damage. Exposure to the sun can damage the retina inside the eye, and contribute to the development of cataracts which cloud the vision. Protect your eyes from exposure to the sun's rays. Wear sunglasses which provide protection against both UVA and UVB ultraviolet radiation.

Hot weather can bring a host of hazards. Take precautions to prevent heat illness and sunburn.

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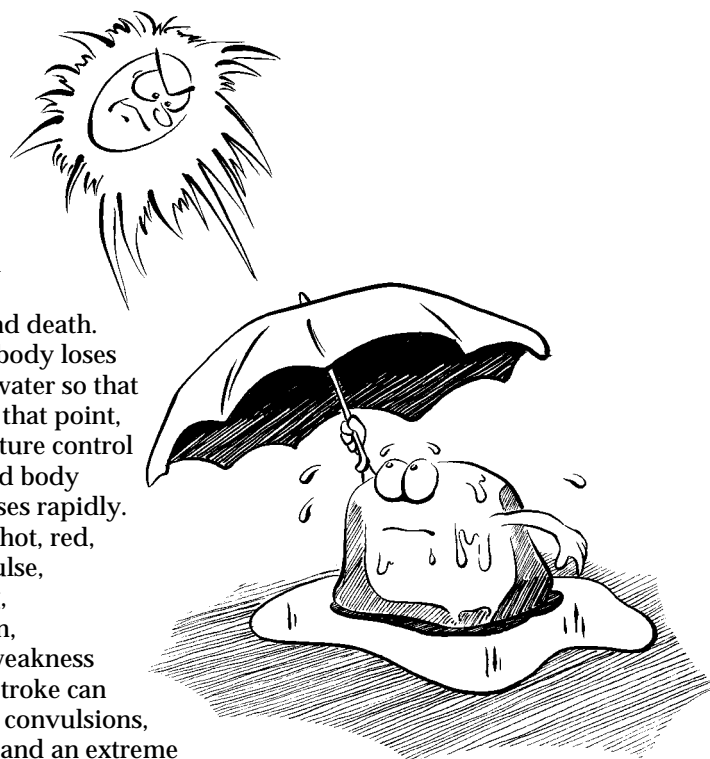
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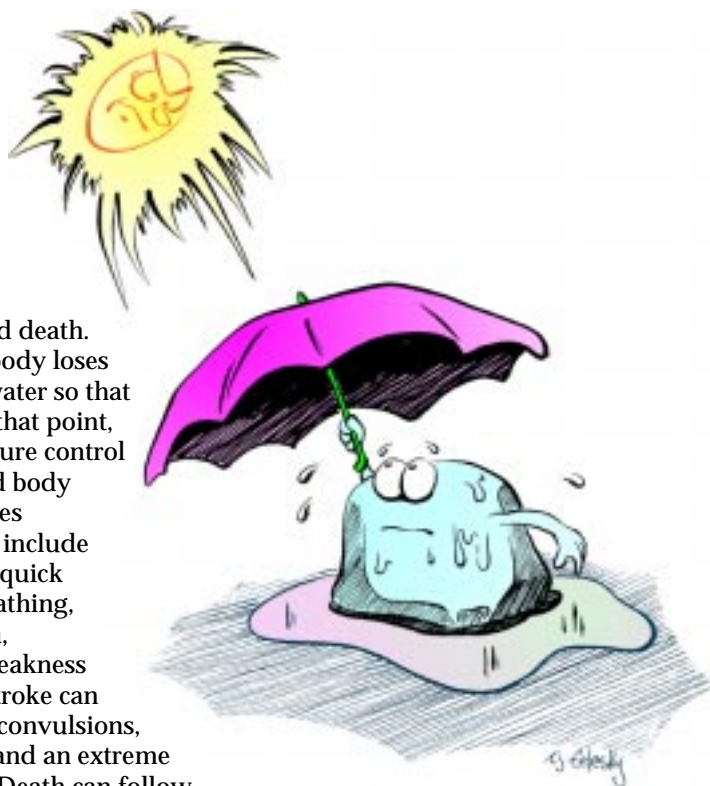
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